Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.(Currently amended) A method of storing and ripening green bananas, the method comprising

(A) providing a sealed package comprising

(a) a sealed container, and

(b) within the sealed container, (i) the green bananas and (ii) a packaging atmosphere around the green bananas which is free of exogenous ethylene;

the sealed container providing a pathway for ~~O_2 and CO_2~~ O_2, CO_2 and ethylene to enter or leave the packaging atmosphere; ~~and~~

(B) ~~(A)~~storing the sealed package in a first controlled atmosphere which, during at least part of step (B), contains (i) less than 18% O_2, and (ii) more than 2% O_2, and is at a temperature between about 14 and 18°C; and

(C) after step (B), exposing the exterior of the sealed package to a second controlled atmosphere which contains (i) at least 3% more oxygen than the first atmosphere, and (ii) exogenous ethylenic ripening agent, thereby ripening the bananas.

2.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the first controlled atmosphere, during at least part of step (B), contains 4 to 12% O_2 ~~and is at a temperature between 14 and 18 °C~~ .

3.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the first controlled atmosphere during at least part of step (B) contains 5 to 9% O_2 ~~and is at a temperature between 14 and 18 °C~~.

4.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the sealed package has an O_2 permeability such that, during at least part of step (B), the O_2 content of the packaging atmosphere is between 2 and 7%. ~~3.5%.~~

5. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1 wherein the sealed package has an O_2 permeability such that, during at least part of step (B), the O_2 content of the packaging atmosphere is between 2 and 5%. ~~which includes~~

~~(C) after step (B), exposing the exterior of the sealed package to a second controlled atmosphere which contains exogenous ethylenic ripening agent, thereby ripening the bananas.~~

6.(currently amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~Claim 5~~ wherein during at least part of step (C) the second controlled atmosphere is a mixture of air and exogenous ethylene.

7.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 1 wherein

(a) the packaging atmosphere, for part of the period before the bananas reach their climacteric, contains 14 to 19% of oxygen, and

(b) the sealed container has (i) an O_2 permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (OP13/kg), of at least 700 ml/atm.24 hrs, and (ii) an ethylene permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (EtOP13/kg) which is at least 3 times the OP13/kg of the container.

~~,(i) the sealed package provided in step (A) contains a latent source of exogenous ethylenic ripening agent;~~

~~(ii) at least the initial part of step (B) is carried out under conditions such that the latent source is not activated;~~

~~(iii) the controlled atmosphere during at least part of step (B) contains 4 to 12% O_2 and is at a temperature between 14 and 18 °C.; and~~

~~(iv) the method includes activating the latent source of exogenous ethylenic ripening agent, thereby ripening the bananas.~~

8.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 7 wherein the package contains 2 to 5 lb. of bananas. ~~, wherein the sealed package has an O_2 permeability such that, during at least part of step (B), the O_2 content of the packaging atmosphere is between 2 and 3.5%.~~

9.(currently amended) A method according to claim 7 ~~claim 1~~ wherein the package contains 16-22 kilograms of bananas, and the sealed container has an O_2 permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (OP13/kg), of at least 700 ~~1500~~ ml/atm.24 hrs.

10.(currently amended) A method according to claim 7 ~~Claim 9~~ wherein the sealed container has an R ratio at 13 °C of at least 3~~, and an ethylene permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (EtOP13/kg) which is at least 3 times the OP13/kg of the container~~.

11.(currently amended) A method of storing and ripening green bananas, the method comprising

(A) providing a sealed package comprising

(a) a sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~, and

(b) within the sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~, (i) the green bananas, and (ii) a packaging atmosphere around the green bananas which is free of exogenous ethylene;

the sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~ comprising at least one atmosphere control member which (i) provides a pathway for O_2, CO_2 and ethylene to enter or leave the packaging atmosphere, and (ii) comprises a microporous polymeric film and a polymeric coating on the microporous film;

(B) storing the sealed package in a first controlled atmosphere which, during at least part of step (B), contains 4 to 12% O_2 and is at a temperature between about 14 and 18 °C., the sealed package having an O_2 permeability such that,

during at least part of step (B), the O_2 content of the packaging atmosphere is between 2 and 7% ~~3.5%~~; and

(C) exposing the exterior of the sealed package to a second controlled atmosphere which contains (i) at least 3% more O_2 than the first controlled atmosphere and (ii) ~~green bananas, while they are in the sealed container, to~~ exogenous ethylenic ripening agent, thereby ripening the green bananas.

12. (canceled)

13.(currently amended) A method according to claim 11 ~~12~~ wherein during at least part of step (C) the second controlled atmosphere is a mixture of air and exogenous ethylene.

14.(original) A method according to Claim 13 wherein at least part of step (B) is carried out while the sealed package is on a ship, and step (C) is carried out on land after the package has been unloaded from the ship.

15. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 11 wherein

(a) the packaging atmosphere, for part of the period before the bananas reach their climacteric, contains 14 to 19% of oxygen, and

(b) the sealed container has (i) an O_2 permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (OP13/kg), of at least 700 ml/atm.24 hrs, and (ii) an ethylene permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (EtOP13/kg) which is at least 3 times the OP13/kg of the container.

~~(i) the sealed package provided in step (A) contains a latent source of exogenous ethylenic ripening agent;~~

~~(ii) at least the initial part of step (B) is carried out under conditions such that the latent source is not activated;~~

~~(iii) step (C) includes activating the latent source of exogenous ethylenic ripening agent.~~

16. (Currently amended) A method according to Claim 15 wherein the package contains 2 to 5 lb. of bananas. ~~11 wherein at least part of step (B) and at least part of step (C) are carried out while the sealed package is on a ship.~~

17.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 15 ~~11~~ wherein the package contains 16-22 kilograms of bananas~~, and the sealed container has an O_2 permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (OP13/kg), of at least 1500 ml/atm.24 hrs~~.

18.(currently amended) A method according to Claim 17 wherein the sealed container has an R ratio at 13 °C of at least 3~~, and an ethylene permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (EtOP13/kg) which is at least 3 times the OP13/kg of the container~~.

19. (Currently amended) A shipping or trucking container which contains a plurality of sealed packages, each of the sealed packages comprising

(a) a sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~, and

(b) within the sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~, (i) ~~16-22 kilograms of~~ bananas which have passed their climacteric and (ii) a packaging atmosphere around the bananas which ~~includes~~ comprises 1.5 to 6% O_2, less than 15% CO_2 , the total quantity of O_2 and CO_2 being less than 16%, and exogenous ethylene or the residue of exogenous ethylene;

the sealed ~~container~~ polymeric bag

(a) having an O_2 permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (OP13/kg), of at least 700 ml/atm.24 hrs and an R ratio at 13 °C of at least 3;

(b) including at least one atmosphere control member which (i) provides ~~providing~~ a pathway for O_2, CO_2 and ethylene to enter or leave the packaging atmosphere, and (ii) comprises a microporous polymeric film and a polymeric coating on the microporous film.

20. (Currently amended) A shipping or trucking container according to Claim 19 wherein each of the plurality of sealed packages contains 16 to 22 kg of bananas. ~~comprises a sealed container comprising at least one atmosphere control member which (i) provides a pathway for O_2, CO_2 and ethylene to enter or leave the packaging atmosphere, and (ii) comprises a microporous polymeric film and a polymeric coating on the microporous film.~~

21. (Currently amended) A sealed package comprising

(a) a sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~, and

(b) within the sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~, (i) bananas which have passed their climacteric and (ii) a packaging atmosphere around the bananas which ~~includes~~ comprises 1.5 to 6% O_2, less than 15% CO_2 , the total quantity of O_2 and CO_2 being less than 16%, and exogenous ethylene or a residue of exogenous ethylene;

the sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~ comprising at least one atmosphere control member which (i) provides a pathway for O_2, CO_2 and ethylene to enter or leave the packaging atmosphere, and (ii) comprises a microporous polymeric film and a polymeric coating on the microporous film; and

the sealed polymeric bag ~~container~~ having an O_2 permeability at 13 °C. per kg of bananas in the package (OP13/kg), of at least to 700 ~~1500~~ ml/atm.24 hrs and an R ratio at 13 °C of at least 2 ~~3~~.

22. (New) A shipping or trucking container according to claim 19 wherein each of the plurality of sealed packages contains 2 to 5 lb. of bananas.

23. (New) A shipping or trucking container according to claim 19 wherein the bananas and the packaging atmosphere are sole contents of each of the sealed bags.

24. (New) A package according to claim 21 wherein the bananas and the packaging atmosphere are sole contents of the sealed bag.

25. (New) A method according to claim 8 wherein

(a) the container is a polymeric bag, and

(b) the bananas and the packaging atmosphere around the bananas are the sole contents of the sealed container.

26. (New) A method according to claim 9 wherein

(a) the container is a polymeric bag, and

(b) the bananas and the packaging atmosphere around the bananas are the sole contents of the sealed container.